

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safe Walking in Montgomery

Montgomery County has a problem with pedestrian safety. In 2002, a record 19 pedestrians were killed on county roads. Just last Saturday a man was killed trying to cross Rockville Pike [Metro in Brief, Jan. 26].

In response, Montgomery has embarked on a campaign to improve crosswalk visibility, change bus stop locations and heighten public consciousness about the issue.

Still, to judge by Twinbrook Parkway from Veirs Mill Road to the Twinbrook Metro station in Rockville during a morning rush hour, the message isn't getting through. Two clearly marked pedestrian crosswalks are located between the traffic signals, which are separated by almost a mile. The law is that cars must stop for pedestrians in a crosswalk, but even a recent police sting at the intersection—complete with officers crossing the street in bright orange shirts with plenty of police presence—was barely noted by most speeding motorists.

Pedestrian safety is also at the root of Montgomery's requirement that residents clear their sidewalks of ice and snow within 24 hours of a snowfall. This common-sense measure is designed to protect schoolchildren who otherwise must walk in the street, seniors and the disabled who find themselves trapped at home, and residents who walk to work or to the bus or Metro.

Pedestrian safety is part of a comprehensive solution to our traffic congestion problems. As we move forward to build roads and improve public transit, we also must build more sidewalks and make it easier for people to get around on foot—without taking their lives into their own hands.

In these areas, as in so much of life, a little consideration and a little responsibility will go a long way.

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